

## Tennessee Approved for Waiver

### *Five-Year Study for Guardianship Subsidy*

On Oct. 14, 2005, Tennessee became the tenth state to be granted a waiver approval from the Department of Health and Human Services to use Title IV-E funds to demonstrate a program providing a guardianship subsidy equal to the regular foster care board rate for children who exit the custody of DCS to the Permanent Guardianship of a relative or other adult with a significant relationship. The demonstration project has been approved for five years. Any extension beyond five years must be approved by DHHS. The Terms and Conditions of Tennessee's contract allow DCS to develop and implement the project no earlier than January 1, 2006 and no later than December 31, 2006.

Under the demonstration project children who meet the criteria below will be randomly assigned to a control or an experimental group. Children who are assigned to the control group will continue to receive services and permanency planning as they normally would as a custodial child through DCS. Children who are assigned to the experimental group will receive the same services as children in the control group in addition to being offered the Subsidized Guardianship option.

Criteria for assignment to the demonstration project are children:

- for whom reunification and adoption are no longer viable permanency options and
- who have been in foster care for at least nine months;
- and who have been in continuous out-of-home-placement with the same caregiver for a minimum of six months.

Exceptions will be made for children for whom reasonable efforts at reunification are not required, children for whom reunification has been ruled out as a permanency option, and for siblings of children already in subsidized guardianship.

Tennessee proposes to demonstrate cost neutrality and cost savings through the following outcomes:

- Increase the number of children who exit foster care and enter permanent placement arrangements with relatives or kin;
- Decrease the length of time that children placed with relatives and kin remain in out-of-home placement;
- Protect children from subsequent abuse or neglect;
- Reduce rates of re-entry into foster care among children who exit out-of-home placement into the custody of relatives or kin;
- Use a family focused permanency-planning approach that effectively supports families through all phases of the process; and
- Address the overrepresentation of minority children in out-of-home placements and respond to the unique needs and cultures of minority children and families.

As a practice, we must ensure that we are diligently searching for relatives on the front end, properly assessing the potential placement arrangement, informing relatives of all their options as relative caregivers on the front end, and respectfully helping relatives understand their role and the role of the department in attaining permanency for the child in their care.

-- Shalonda Cawthon and Betty Smith

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## **PIP...CFSP...P2E:** *Find Out What They Mean to DCS*

P2E, PIP, CFSP, Chafee IL plan, IVE Training Plan, CAPTA Plan, RIPS. These are some of the many DCS plans that speak to various aspects of the agency's work. [If you just can't wait, skip to the glossary at the end of the article.]

If some of the acronyms don't sound familiar, don't worry. The assorted plans – just the acronyms alone, much less the reporting requirements and timeframes – can create confusion and frustration for central office staff who have responsibilities around the plans. And many of the plans remain a mystery to the child welfare professionals in the field doing the day-to-day work of protecting children and working with children and families. While some of the plans – particularly P2E and the Regional

Implementation Plans (RIPs) – are widely known and utilized, it is not necessary that all field staff have great familiarity with all of the plans.

It is important that all field staff understand the core outcomes relating to safety, permanency and well being on which DCS is measured. And it is essential that all of the plans enhance the ability of the front-line Case Manager to do quality casework that effectively addresses these core outcomes, using a model of practice that is family-focused, child-centered, strengths-based, culturally-sensitive and community-based.

Aside from the Path to Excellence (P2E or PTE) and the Regional Implementation Plans, many of DCS' plans are required by the federal regulations that govern our work. Typically, these federal plans are developed in consultation with and submitted to the Administration for Children & Families (ACF) of the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services ("the feds.") The plans help to demonstrate DCS' efforts to comply with federal law, thereby allowing us to claim federal funding.

Among the various DCS plans, the terms vary, and the measures vary, but the underlying goals are the same: keeping children safe and achieving timely permanency and well-being for children and their families by performing quality casework and providing quality services. Those of us with responsibility for the various plans are working with program staff to "crosswalk" and integrate these plans so that all of us – front-line, supervisory, administrative and management staff – can stay focused on the core outcomes that should drive all of our work.

While various planning documents must be submitted at regular intervals (most plans are annual, some are five year plans), and while these plans are fundamental to defining how the agency will work toward its core outcomes, it is important to understand that ACF also conducts on-the-ground reviews of child welfare programs. A key review process is the Child & Family Services Review (CFSR), the first round of which started in 2001 and ended in 2004, with each state being reviewed on core outcomes related to safety, permanency and well-being and on systemic factors (like training, information system, quality assurance system) that support the agency's ability to achieve those outcomes.

As many of you know, Tennessee underwent its first CFSR review in 2002, after which we worked with ACF to develop a two-year Program Improvement Plan that addressed the areas of deficiency identified in the review.

Information related to DCS' first CFSR review, including DCS' self-assessment and ACF's final report can be found under "Federal Initiatives" on DCS' intranet homepage. The two-year PIP period ended on June 30, 2005. As we ready ourselves for the next stages in the CFSR process (ultimately leading to another on-site review), we want to synthesis our various planning, self-assessment and quality improvement processes to the maximum extent possible and, most importantly, ensure that those processes support and help advance the agency's fundamental mission of providing timely safety, permanency and well-being to vulnerable children, utilizing non-custodial services to keep families intact whenever appropriate.

Links:

<http://www.state.tn.us/youth/federal/CFSR%20Statewide%20Assessment.pdf>

<http://www.state.tn.us/youth/federal/TN%20Final%20Report%208-2002.PDF>

*Stay tuned for more information on the 2003-2005 PIP and on our status in the CFSR process.*

\* Glossary of Terms

- **CFSR** = Child and Family Services Review – federal review to determine State conformity with federal requirements and to assist States in achieving better results for children and families involved in the child welfare system
- **PIP** = Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) Program Improvement Plan (PIP) – 2 year compliance plan driven by results of CFSR
- **CFSP** = Title IV-B Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) – broad 5 year plan outlining agency's goals
- **IV-E Training Plan** – plan describing how training funds using dollars from Title IV-E of the Social Security Act will be used
- **CAPTA Plan** = Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act Plan – plan outlining prevention services funded through CAPTA
- **Chafee IL Plan** = Chafee Independent Living Plan – plan detailing use of funds under the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program, which focuses on older youth
- **Path to Excellence** (PTE or P2E) – *Brian A.* implementation plan
- **RIP** = Regional Implementation Plan – Plan designed by and implemented in each region to focus on regional work around particular issues and outcomes.

- Susan Mee, Jeff Williamson & Petrina Jones-Jesz

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Psychiatric help: 5 minutes  
The doctor is in!  
*Q and A with Dr. Deborah Gatlin*  
*DCS consulting psychiatrist*

Dear Dr. Gatlin:

*The child in my care is on a psychotropic medication —a mood stabilizer. As I understand it, these medications have not been tested on children. Should the foster parent be looking for signs to make sure this medication is OK? How can we know it is working?*

Maxine:

There are many different “mood stabilizers,” and each has its own set of potential side effects. Questions about the side effects of a specific medication should be directed to the prescribing provider. All medications, psychotropic or not, have potential side effects. The Primary caretaker of any child, in this case the foster parent, should always be aware of the side effects of specific medications prescribed to children in their care. The best source of this information is the prescribing provider. That is an important reason that foster parents should be involved in the medical visits for children.

In thinking through the effectiveness of medication, remember that medications are given for a particular reason, i.e. to alleviate specified symptoms. To determine if the medication is effective, it is important to observe whether the specified symptoms are improving. Giving feedback to the prescribing provider about the effects of medication (both good and bad) is very important, and caretakers should provide that valuable information to the provider. The provider can make a better and educated decision about treatment with the right input from those taking care of the child.

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## CONGRATS!

Congratulations to **JANE TOOMBS** on her Retirement after 43 years as a State employee. Jane is a secretary in Shelby County's Memphis office. On Oct. 20, a luncheon was held

at the Memphis Marriott to thank her for her outstanding service to children and adults in Tennessee.

Jane will be greatly missed as a dedicated employee and for her sense of humor.

We wish her much joy as she begins to experience the wonders of retirement.

- Joan Hickey

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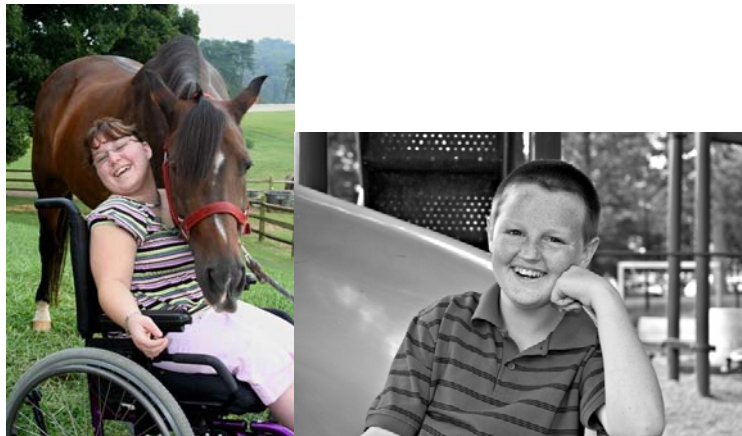
**Karen Larrimore**, the new Health Administrator at Taft Youth Development Center, is the recipient of the 2005 Excellence in Gerontological Nursing Award.

She came to Taft in August 2005 and we are very proud of her.

-- Patricia Slade

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## HEART GALLERY UPDATE



This fall, the "Collaboration to Adopt Us Kids" , the Adoption Exchange, and the portrait selection committee announced the results of their picks for the two national exhibits planned in Washington, D.C. - November 1, 2005. The selection committee informed us that they received submissions from dozens of Heart Gallery groups from over 30 states. In determining which photos would be selected the committee wanted to make certain they selected a variety of photos representative of the waiting children across the U.S. The committee took into

consideration ethnicity, age, gender and sibling group/single children.

Gift for a Child, Inc. is managing the Heart Gallery Southeast project. We are pleased to announce that the following photographic work of foster children from Tennessee will be represented at the National Exhibit.

The following photographer's work will be represented:

**Union Station Exhibit:**

Tennessee - Hal Jaffee's photo of Kiara and Terene. (from Memphis)

Tennessee - Christine Patterson's photo of Nicole B (from East TN).

Approximately 80,000 people per day will view Union Station's display for the 2 weeks it is up (the numbers are based on traditional commuter traffic flow at Union Station).

**Russell Senate Building Exhibit:**

Tennessee - Jennifer Shaffer's photo of Patrick D. (from East TN)

-- Sukanda Langley

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**JOHN S. WILDER YOUTH DEVELOPMENT CENTER  
EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION DAY**



Front row: Remus Williams, Winnie Cole, Inell Manley, Aretha Jackson, Bonnie Lee, Claudia Williams, Glenda Clayton

Second row: Robert Roby, Patrick Erwin, Everett Singleton, Tireca Thompson, Jo Wilson, Lisa Kee, Janice Jackson, Barbara Currie, Fredward Towles, Mary Mitchell

Back row: Edgar Whitmore, George McGowan, Kevin Harris, Kelvin Starks (not pictured Michael Buchanan, Gregory Jackson, Thomas Mathews, Linda Williams, Samuel White, Donice Bradley, Martin Catron, Clifford Davis, Christine Johnson)

The staff at John S. Wilder Youth Development Center celebrated their annual Employee Recognition Day on October 21, 2005. This annual event is set aside to recognize the commitment and dedication of all staff, and to especially honor those employees with longevity. In addition, special recognition was given to various groups and individuals. Special guests attending the ceremony included Seth N. Garrington, former WYDC Superintendent, Representative Dolores Gresham, William R. Hackett, Shelby County Program Director, Steve Hornsby, Deputy Commissioner of Juvenile Justice, Judge Bill Rhea, General Sessions and Juvenile Court Judge, Skip Taylor, Mayor of Fayette County Myles Wilson, Fayette County Superintendent of Schools, family and friends of the honorees, and several WYDC retirees. Lt. Governor John S. Wilder was unable to attend this year due to his schedule.

The following WYDC staff were recognized for their years of dedicated service to the State of Tennessee and J.S. Wilder Youth Development Center and were presented with certificates and awards:

- 30 years: Aretha Jackson, Bonnie Lee
- 25 years: Fredward Towles
- 20 years: Donice Bradley, Martin Catron, Clifford Davis, Janice Jackson, Christine Johnson, George McGowan, Mary Mitchell, Remus Williams
- 15 years: Barbara Currie, Robert Roby, Samuel White, Claudia Williams
- 10 years: Inell Manley, Linda Williams
- 5 years: Michael Buchanan, Glenda Clayton, Winnie Cole, Patrick Erwin, Kevin Harris, Gregory Jackson, Lisa Kee, Thomas Mathews, Everett Singleton, Kelvin Starks, Tireca Thompson, Edgar Whitmore and Jo Wilson

During the ceremony, staff members who have passed away were remembered with the lighting of a candle for each person followed by the singing of "So Hard To Say Good-Bye" by Ms. Jacquelyn Butler, CS Officer. The program also honored those in the military and WYDC retirees with songs performed for each by Alfreda Lurry, Teacher Asst. and Christopher Ingram, respectively. Layne Burrow was awarded the Seth N. Garrington Award for Excellence in recognition and appreciation of his exceptional job performance, and his consistent and unwavering dedication and support during his 29 years of service to The State of Tennessee Department of Children's Services and John S. Wilder Youth Development Center staff and students. The following special Awards were presented to selected employees: SPIRIT, Unsung Hero, Appreciation, and Employee of the Year.

SPIRIT Awards: Barbara Harris, Secretary, Kathy Martin, Teacher, Valda Ray-Lewis, CSCM2, Jeannie Robertson, Account Clerk, and Kelvin Starks, CS Lt.

Unsung Hero: Jerry Howell, Assistant Principal

Appreciation: Jacquelyn Butler, CSO, and Nancy Burch-Weeks, Procurement Officer

Employee of the Year: Helen Campbell, LPN2

The ceremony was followed with a dinner where all enjoyed good food and fellowship. Many thanks go to the staff that made this event so special.

-- Clara Harris

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The Davidson County Resource Home Recruitment and Retention Unit had a recruitment booth set up at the Sixth Annual Mayor's First Day Festival. Pictured are the Mayor of Nashville, Bill Purcell with Georgianna Hooker, Team Leader for Davidson county's Resource Home Recruitment and Retention Unit, Deandrea Witherspoon case manager, Corenthia Curtis -case manager and Dana Clegg -case manager.

-- Arthur Hicks